



IRON COUNTY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ICRTEC CHAIR—MAYOR CONNIE ROBINSON • ICRTAC CHAIR—TOM STRATTON • PLANNING MANAGER—CURT HUTCHINGS

MINUTES

Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

April 2, 2014, 10:30 am

Parowan City Library

16 S. Main Street, Parowan UT

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Rob Dotson
Mr. Kit Wareham
Mr. Shayne Scott
Mr. Monte Aldridge

REPRESENTING:

Enoch City Manager
Cedar City
Parowan City
Utah Dept. of Transportation

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Mayor Connie Robinson
Mr. Tom Stratton
Mr. Steve Platt
Ms. Brenda Pugh

REPRESENTING:

Paragonah Town
Brian Head
Iron County
Kanarraville Town

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Dave Demas
Mr. Levi Roberts

REPRESENTING:

Five County Assoc. of Governments
Five County Assoc. of Governments

I. Quorum Declaration

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Shayne Scott in the absence of Mr. Tom Stratton. Mr. Scott welcomed all present and declared there was a quorum present.

II. Approve Minutes for February 5, 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Rob Dotson, seconded by Mr. Monte Aldridge, to approve the February 5, 2014 Minutes of the Iron County Rural Transportation Advisory Committee.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY



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III. **UDOT** *(This agenda item was moved due to Mr. Aldridge's need to be excused early)*

A. Instructions on how to access the UDOT website for project information

Mr. Aldridge provided a computer demonstration of the interactive projects map on the UDOT website. He explained that this map can be used to see any project in the state. It allows the user to search by a specific county and also to select by project type. He demonstrated that when viewing a construction project the data sheet will describe the project, project values and the project schedule. In addition to construction projects, users can see projects that are in design. Mr. Aldridge stated that the site is a simple, quick way to see projects that are planned, in design, in construction or projects that are closed out.

Mr. Demas remarked that the projects map is a very good resource and asked if the map includes any and all projects that UDOT is involved in. Mr. Aldridge stated that virtually all projects, studies, designs, and orange book projects are included on the map. However, there are some planning and smaller projects that are not included; UDOT has an internal map for those types of projects. Any STIP related project will be included on the project map website. Mr. Aldridge will send the committee members a link to the website.

B. UDOT and the wildlife crossings

Mr. Aldridge provided a presentation on wildlife crossings that explained the reason why the crossings are needed, the finances, economics and safety issues related to the crossings. Mr. Aldridge commented that many people have asked why highway money should be spent on this issue.

Mr. Aldridge explained that the primary reason for reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions is safety. One of UDOT's primary goals is safety and zero fatalities. Mr. Aldridge stated that we cannot get to zero fatalities without dealing with wildlife issues and keeping wildlife off the highway. The next reason is Contact Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The principles of CSS are to address the transportation needs, to be an asset to the community and also to be compatible with the natural environment. If UDOT is following the CSS principles then wildlife corridors need to be addressed.

And the final reason for reducing the collisions is the economic impact. Mr. Aldridge reported that according to the Western Transportation Institute the average cost for a deer-vehicle collision is \$8,300 per incident. The average for a



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collision with an elk is \$17,000 and \$30,000 for moose. He stated that there are approximately 2,300 deer-vehicle collisions reported in Utah.

Mr. Aldridge reported that from 1992 to 2011 Region 4 had a minimum of 32 fatalities resulting from wildlife-vehicle collisions. The number has now increased to 34 due to a double fatality in 2013 near Gunnison. On average in Region 4 there are 2 known fatalities per year based on wildlife. Mr. Aldridge stated that he feels the statistics are low. There may be other fatal accidents that are not reported (i.e. single driver accidents making evasive maneuvers to avoid wildlife that run off the road). Research indicates that carcass's picked up and reported accidents severely under estimate the number of wildlife collisions. The research also indicates that the 2,300 reported accidents may be only 10-20% of the actual number. Mr. Aldridge shared that in discussions with DWR (Division of Wildlife Resources) they feel the number of deer killed on Utah highways is probably closer to 23,000 per year. This number is more than the number killed by predators and possibly by hunters so it is clear that highways have a significant impact on the deer population.

Mr. Wareham stated that they typically have 6 to 10 deer-vehicle collisions on Main Street alone in Cedar City every year. Mr. Demas added that there are also a couple deer-vehicle collisions in the St. George area near Riverside Drive and Red Hills Parkway each year.

Mr. Aldridge remarked that from a safety perspective, wildlife-vehicle collisions are a big issue for UDOT. In order to address the transportation needs regarding wildlife crossings, the solutions must be technically credible and able to be implemented. In some instances, it may not be technically feasible to build a crossing.

Mr. Aldridge reviewed statistics for carcass pick-ups and animal-vehicle collisions. He provided a comparison of carcass pick-ups from Beaver to I-70 in the Wildcat area from 1996-2004 versus pickups from 2005-2009 after installing a wildlife crossing project. The total number of carcass pick-ups went from several hundred per year to just 5-10 per year. He shared that the data from the Black Ridge area has also dramatically changed. After two fencing projects were completed in 2011 and 2012, the animal-vehicle collisions dropped 72% in 2013 over the average of the previous 4 years. He remarked that there is still a challenge near Parowan where there is fencing on the east side but not on the west. This situation will need to be addressed. A crossing was installed on US-89 at milepost



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5 and the carcass pick-ups (primarily elk) have gone down to almost zero. Mr. Aldridge stated that the entire corridor on US-89 east of Kanab is a challenge. However, through research and working with DWR, a 12 mile section was identified as the worst area.

Mr. Aldridge discussed how UDOT is an asset to the community by protecting wildlife resources that are an important part of the local quality of life and economy. He shared as an example the Paunsaugunt deer herd in Kanab which is a big draw for their economy with hunters and also for individuals just viewing the wildlife. The average tag generates an economic impact of over \$25,000 for the community. The hunting industry has a significant impact on the economy. Being an asset to the community is an important part of what UDOT does.

Mr. Aldridge stated that the preservation and integrity of wildlife corridors and migration routes and access to key forage areas are critical. He explained that it's not simply about building a fence and keeping the animals off the roads. The fences keep wildlife from getting to their forage areas or getting to their seasonal ranges. They also have a significant impact on the genetic diversity and health of the herds. Mr. Dotson asked if any deer have ever been observed on the bridge that was built in the 1970's over I-15 near Beaver. Mr. Aldridge responded that the deer use the crossing quite a bit and it has been very effective. It was the first dedicated wildlife crossing structure in the United States.

Mr. Aldridge explained that working in conjunction with DWR to achieve and maintain natural populations, population dynamics and population distributions in a way that protects and enhances UDOT's resources is key to mitigating wildlife-vehicle collisions. While this is not the primary focus of UDOT, it is a very important part of the crossing projects. Safety is the emphasis for UDOT.

Mr. Aldridge reviewed the local economic impacts and cost benefit analysis of the wildlife crossings. The cost benefit analysis is conducted to define the value of the crossings and demonstrate how they actually pay for themselves over time. Mr. Aldridge explained that although the Western Transportation Institute cost estimate for a deer-vehicle accident is \$8,300, UDOT uses a very conservative estimate of \$3,500 for 90% of the accidents in their cost analysis calculations. They also only assume that 10% of the accidents are high value accidents. They do use the full cost estimate of \$17,000 for elk-vehicle accidents.



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Mr. Aldridge walked the committee through the cost benefit analysis for several completed projects. He explained that the savings that are identified by the cost analysis is a savings for the traveling public not for UDOT. He noted that UDOT uses costs to the public to justify many of their projects.

Mr. Aldridge highlighted a project between Kanab and Page AZ that was completed in September 2013. Three new crossings were built and 4 existing structures were fenced. The cameras at those crossings showed 3,700 deer passing by the cameras. He explained that virtually all crossings have cameras. Mr. Scott asked for clarification on the time frame that the deer were observed on the cameras. Mr. Aldridge responded that the deer passed by the cameras from October 1st to November 15th. There is a huge migration of the deer during that 6 week time frame.

Mr. Aldridge explained that he will be involved in an evaluation on May 5th in San Pete County due to a substantial wildlife crossing issue north of Manti. UDOT coordinates with DWR to establish background information with mapping and accident data. They also work with the local biologists, the DWR CO officers and habitat and range management staff, and, if possible, County Sheriff, Highway Patrol, EMS personnel and County Commissioners. They evaluate the corridor mile by mile to identify the challenges related to wildlife-vehicle collisions. They also define what the existing infrastructure is to determine whether the wildlife needs to cross the highway or if they can be fenced off. They review the ecological needs as well as the transportation needs.

Mr. Aldridge noted that they are aware of and are addressing the worst 'hot spots' on I-15 in Iron County. They consider an area a 'hot spot' when there are hundreds of wildlife-vehicle collisions per year. He asked the committee members to let him know if they have other areas of concern.

Mr. Wareham asked if the drainage structures can be enlarged to accommodate the wildlife when building new roads. Mr. Aldridge replied that it can be done; they have done this on several projects on US-6. He stated it will work with deer but it is difficult to accommodate elk because of their size.

Mr. Aldridge reported that they are looking at another possible solution when the topography doesn't allow for a standard crossing. The ElectroMat is a product that is designed to go across the highway perpendicular to the traffic lanes. It essentially creates an at-grade cross walk for the animals. It alleviates the need



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for fencing going into a structure that goes under or over the highway. The system requires 2 mats approximately 100-200 feet apart. The purpose is to keep the animals from coming back up the right-of-way. The animals come down the fencing to cross and the system uses military grade cameras with motion detectors and an infrared heat stamp to detect them. An electric sign is activated to warn motorists that there are animals in the crosswalk area. Arizona has had success using this product.

Mr. Aldridge explained that it is currently expensive to do an at-grade crossing using this product - approximately \$500,000 each. UDOT is working with the company to bring the costs down closer to \$300,000. If the cost can be reduced the product could be a huge asset in many areas.

Mr. Wareham inquired as to how UDOT would count an animal carcass that was hit again by a second vehicle. Mr. Aldridge explained that it would be counted as one accident unless the Highway Patrol reported it as a secondary animal-vehicle collision. He explained that UDOT has a smart phone application that is used by their contract drivers. They drive the highways that have high numbers of accidents twice per week. The drivers pick up the carcass and enter data about the animal into the application (species, sex, age, biological characteristics, etc.) The application updates (in real time) a GIS map that is maintained to monitor accident data. UDOT is working with the Highway Patrol to get real time GIS mapping on all accidents.

Mr. Demas commented that the elements of the program include fencing, underground and overhead crossings and other structures to get the wildlife off the interstate. Mr. Aldridge explained that for the fencing projects completed on I-15 in the last 3 years, there were adequate crossings; they were able to utilize all the existing structures and did not have to build any new structures. Drainage culverts, county roads and bridges can function as a wildlife crossing. They can be fenced to direct the deer to the crossing. He stated that there should be approximately 1 ½ miles in between crossings. When deer encounter a fence, they will only walk about 1 mile in either direction to find a crossing; elk will travel about 2-3 miles. So, ideally there should be a crossing approximately every 2-3 miles for deer.

Mr. Aldridge explained that in some locations fencing is used because the deer don't need to get to the other side. An example of this is in the Parowan area where there is fencing on the east side only. The deer do not need to be on the



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west side of the interstate. Unfortunately they are getting to the west side and get inside the right-of-way fence. Mr. Demas asked if the structures that are on the inside help to get the deer out and if they are used by the deer. Mr. Aldridge stated that the jump-off ramps do give the deer a place to escape. They are effective if the deer are left alone but they don't work well when a deer is being pressured. Mr. Demas asked about the height of the fencing. Mr. Aldridge responded that the fence height is 8 feet. They have a very economical fence that is approximately \$5.00 per foot for wildlife fencing.

Mr. Aldridge was excused from the meeting at this time.

IV. Mobility Management Presentation by AOG

Mr. Levi Roberts, Five County AOG Mobility Manager, provided an overview of their Mobility Management program. He stated that Mr. Demas has also been heavily involved in the Mobility Management program this year. Mr. Demas commented that this information is a follow up to the presentation provided by Mr. Tim Boschert.

Mr. Roberts explained that the definition of Mobility Management is “an innovative approach for managing and delivering a coordinated transportation services”. He went on to explain that there are 2 components to Mobility Management. The first component is the Individual Level which is working with individuals, training on the available transportation resources, providing education and outreach about the services available and coordinating that information.

The second component is the Systems Level which includes coordinating and/or expanding community transportation services to ensure an availability of a range of mobility options. The emphasis is on coordinating existing resources to most efficiently meet the needs of people with limited mobility. The focus is on seniors, people with disabilities and the low income but the services benefit the entire community. The Systems Level is mainly working directly with the transportation providers to best manage their services.

Mr. Roberts noted three benefits of Mobility Management: 1) Improved delivery and efficiency of transportation services with a focus on utilizing existing resources to meet the demand (i.e. helping to coordinate a ride share situation when two different transportation services are making similar trips). 2) Increased mobility and independence for people who are cannot drive or are unable to get around. The local transportation services provided by public transit, senior citizens centers and other



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services for people with disabilities can make difference in whether people get to work or a doctor appointment. 3) Increased economic impact. Many people with limited mobility, including low income seniors and the disabled, make fewer trips than the general population. Providing transportation services for these individuals allows them to make more trips which creates additional revenue for the local economy. It allows them to get to work and shopping. Another aspect is providing an option for individuals with limited mobility who are relying on a working family member for their transportation needs. This can decrease productivity if that family member must take time off from work.

Mr. Roberts explained that the strategies of the Five County AOG Mobility Management program are determined using the Southwest Utah Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plan and working with the Regional Mobility Council (RMC). The RMC includes representatives from all of the Five County area. In Iron County, the CATS Manager and the Council on Aging Director are members of the RMC committee.

Mr. Roberts went on to explain more about the Individual Level component of Mobility Management. He is currently working on a project that will help educate the public about services that are available. He is developing a website that will provide detailed information about transportation services that are available in the region. Mr. Roberts provided a short demonstration of the website. The website will include information regarding public transportation (SunTran, CATS, national park shuttles), senior transportation services, inter-city bus service (shuttles, Greyhound bus) and taxi service. The website address is:
<http://fcaogtpo.wordpress.com/public-transportation> He noted that they are currently evaluating the website to make it more user-friendly and working to simplify the URL for the site address.

Mr. Roberts explained that they also provide a Travel Training program that involves meeting with individuals one-on-one to coach them to use the public transportation system. The program started this year with the SunTran service and they plan to provide the training for the CATS service in the future. He reported that they are also coordinating with 2-1-1 (an information referral service for human services) to provide information on transportation services. Another possible resource is the Google Maps system that provides detailed information for people using public transit services. He provided a demonstration of the Google Maps system. Mr. Roberts reported that all of the route information for SunTran, CATS and Aztec



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Shuttle has been added to the Google Maps system. He is working with St. George Shuttle to include their route information as well.

Mr. Roberts explained that the Systems Level component includes the Regional Mobility Council which is comprised of public transit providers, other transportation providers, human service representatives from DWS (Department of Workforce Services) and other agencies with services for people with disabilities. The council meets bi-monthly to discuss the different services that are offered and work to coordinate trips and services that are available.

Mr. Roberts reported that they are also working to coordinate van pools. They assisted Ruby's Inn in establishing a successful van pool program that currently has 19 passengers. Mr. Demas remarked that they may have increased to 21 passengers. Mr. Roberts added that they now have 2 vans. Mr. Demas asked about the cost to the employee. Mr. Roberts responded that it is approximately \$20 per week which is automatically deducted from their paycheck as a non-taxable item. Mr. Demas commented that it is similar to a flexible spending plan that provides a tax benefit for the employee and also the employer. Mr. Roberts stated that Brian Head also has a van pool. He has been told that since their peak season is ending, they will be sending 1 van down to be used at Ruby's Inn.

Mr. Roberts shared that there is also a Bus Shelter Work Group that is working to implement better facilities for people waiting for the bus. He added that Mr. Demas is heavily involved in this group. There is a CATS representative on the Work Group. The Work Group began working with specific SunTran shelters but CATS has provided valuable information about design and implementation since they actually have more shelters in place than SunTran.

Mr. Roberts explained that they are also working with the coordination to expand existing transportation services. They look for opportunities to work with cities where there is a demand for public transit and help to expand existing services that are available.

Mr. Wareham asked if there were any ways to encourage the public to use the public transportation system. Their ridership in Cedar City is down. Mr. Demas pointed out that one issue may be the length and frequency of the routes that is making it unpopular. St. George has dealt with the same issue. They have gone to a 40 minute schedule with 4 different routes and their ridership is up tremendously. He noted that finding the right route that is useful to the public may be the solution and that



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may be what Cedar City is struggling with now. Mr. Roberts added that is something that Mobility Management could look at to help. They recently launched a press release on the Google Maps system. The system would allow people, and specifically students, to use their smart phones to easily access the system.

V. New Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Scott suggested that this agenda item be tabled until the next meeting since there was no longer a quorum present.

VI. Other Discussion Items

- A. Meeting schedule – To be determined based on the ICCC Meeting schedule
- B. Next meeting will be held on June 4, 2014
 - i. Location: to follow the ICCC location if possible

VII. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned.